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MONTANA LABOR MARKET

Monthly Review of
EMPLOYMENT OUTLOOK, LABOR SUPPLY, LABOR DEMAND, CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

MONTANA STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE Division of Unemployment Compensation Commission of Montana

Albert F. Root, Commissioner

Chadwick H. Smith, Chairman

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Mitchell Building — P. O. Box 1728 — Helena, Montana

FL. 193.

MARCH, 1959

Upward Trend Continues In Industrial Employment

While total number of wage earners in Montana's non-agricultural industries was down seasonally by 2,000 from January to February, it rose 1,200 above the figure for February, 1958, according to estimates by the Commission in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The February employment figure is given at 150,200, a year ago it was 149,000, and in February, 1957, it was 157,800.

Employment Estimates Revised

Once a year employment estimates, based on samples and reported monthly in this publication, are adjusted to conform to the actual employment figures reported by employers covered by the Montana Unemployment Compensation Law. Revised estimates for 1958 are included in a supplement to this month's issue of the "Montana Labor Market." The figures used are based upon a recent revision of the series for the year 1958, using a March, 1958, benchmark and makes use of the most current and accurate information available concerning employment in Montana. In the new series, started in January, 1958, some changes have been made in the assignment of some industries to the various employment subcategories. The changes were made on a national scale as part of a program of improving statistical reporting. Those who regularly use the employment statistics are cautioned that the changes in industrial coding and the government benchmark somewhat limit the comparability of the employment detail between 1957 and 1958 and between these years and the previous years.

FEBRUARY SURPLUS OF JOBBEEKERS IS 22,000 AS SEASONAL LAY-OFFS REACH PEAK LEVEL

Following traditional seasonal patterns peculiar to the Montana economy, numerical upsurge of February jobseekers brought the total to 21,802 at the end of the month. New job applicants during February were 3,855 as continuing layoffs, shutdowns, and force reductions occurred in outdoor activities vulnerable to weather conditions. Most of the new applications were from the fields of construction, lumbering and logging, oil field work and other outdoor endeavors. As the month ended and the weather moderated, many of the idled workers were recalled to employment. Employment growth in the lumbering and logging industry may be temporarily slowed the next six weeks due to soft access roads and fixed load limits. Future prospects, however, are good and employment expansion in this industry during the coming season could well surpass purely seasonal trends. Barring unforeseen circumstances, the statewide seasonal upturn should begin at the end of March and employment totals rise rapidly through the spring and summer months.

	Work-Applicant Count in Review						
	1959	1958	1957	1956	1955	1954	1953
January	20,350	21,533	14,792	12,676	12,887	12,270	10,616
February	21,802	23,750	16,695	13,061	12,304	12,455	10,995
March	18,900*	23,394	14,930	12,663	11,979	11,075	9,323
May		15,233	9,032	5,105	5,565	6,191	4,324
July		11,784	6,419	3,807	4,628	4,283	3,249
September		8,065	6,328	2,889	2,781	3,782	2,288
November		13,013	12,564	6,453	6,968	5,617	5,048

*Estimated

Four Industries Ahead of Last Year

Four major industrial groups showed gains in employment totals over last year. Principal increases were in government, up 1,400 contract construction, up 1,300, and all mining, up 700. Finance, insurance and real estate was 100 above last year. Employment advances in these groups were sufficient to outweigh losses in manufacturing, down 400, transportation and utilities, down 900, trade, down 700, and service industries, down 300. In the total mining group metal mining is up 500 over last February, but still 3,200

short of the February, 1957, employment total for this industry. Employment totals have improved and unemployment has declined, but the supply of labor is continuing to exceed demand by a substantial amount. Improvement in production techniques and economies forced on employers during the recent recession appear to enable firms to produce substantial increases in output of goods and services without a corresponding increase in the need for labor. Industrial output has expanded faster than the demand for labor, with material changes in the existing pattern of job opportunities.

LABOR TURNOVER RATES IN MANUFACTURING AND MINING INDUSTRIES (per 100 employees)

INDUSTRY	ACCESSION RATE						SEPARATION RATE								
	Total			New Hire			Total			Quit			Layoff		
	Jan. 1959	Dec. 1958	Jan. 1958	Jan. 1959	Dec. 1958	Jan. 1958	Jan. 1959	Dec. 1958	Jan. 1958	Jan. 1959	Dec. 1958	Jan. 1958	Jan. 1959	Dec. 1958	Jan. 1958
All Manufacturing.....	2.7	1.8	1.5	1.5	1.2	0.6	2.8	3.7	2.3	1.1	1.4	0.5	1.1	1.5	1.4
Durable Goods.....	3.3	2.2	2.1	1.6	1.3	0.7	3.3	4.9	2.9	0.9	1.9	0.6	1.5	2.0	2.0
Primary Metal.....	2.2	1.1	2.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	1.7	2.4	1.2	0.5	1.8	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.5
Nondurable Goods.....	1.7	1.3	0.6	1.3	1.0	0.5	2.0	1.7	1.3	1.4	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.4
All Mining.....	6.0	4.2	1.2	1.5	1.2	0.6	3.8	4.9	3.5	2.1	1.7	1.7	1.0	2.1	1.0
Metal Mining.....	5.2	4.6	1.1	0.2	0.3	0.1	4.2	3.0	4.2	2.8	1.7	1.9	0.6	4.1	1.5

1959 rates are not strictly comparable with 1958 rates due to changes in report form on which basic data are obtained

Total separations include discharges and misc. separations.

†Excludes canning and sugar industries *Less than 0.05.

Along the Hiring Line— Field Summary, Mar. 1

ANACONDA, Deer Lodge, Philipsburg—(468 jobseekers, 144 new; 348 men, 138 women). Smelter employment fairly stable with periodic transfers from one plant department to another. Small mines in Philipsburg area reduced working forces during month. Construction activity on limited basis as weather permits. New hires reported at State Prison and two State Hospitals.

BILLINGS, Columbus, Hardin, Hysham, Laurel, Red Lodge, Roundup—(3,079 jobseekers, 643 new, 2,149 men, 930 women). Intermittent work on bridge and overpass construction on major highways kept 30 men employed. Road work suspended during month. Backlog of building construction awaits clearing weather, including new structures and remodeling of downtown stores. Fifty new homes under construction, with 65 more slated for early spring schedule. Trade and service industries in good volume after holiday season. Railroad hiring nil, with no extra gangs expected until April or May. Farm labor demands show mild increase, with surplus of applicants in area.

BOZEMAN, Ennis, Three Forks, Tipton—(825 jobseekers, 173 new; 632 men, 193 women). Deep snow temporarily suspended some lumber and logging operations with reduced activity at local sawmills. Building program at Montana State College progresses on interior finish and decorating work. Road construction expected to reopen latter part of month. Upswing noted in agricultural hiring as weather moderated.

BUTTE, Virginia City, Whitehall—(1,968 jobseekers, 297 new; 1,431 men, 537 women). No significant changes in metal mining picture as underground and pit mining on fairly stable basis. Open pit zinc mining clouded by right-of-way dispute, possibly affecting 80 workers. Trade and service industries slow in recovering. Projected construction projects should employ bulk of idled construction workers within the near future. Ample labor supply in area.

CULBANK—(570 jobseekers, 78 new, 440 men, 130 women). Labor market picture remains unchanged from past month. Some lay-offs of sales personnel and service workers in trade and service industries as business volume lessened. Winter feeding and sheep tagging main agricultural activities.

DILLON—(240 jobseekers, 74 new; 164 men, 76 women). Completion of new Saterway store building expected 4-15-59. Other construction slow and limited to interior painting and finish work. Twenty-four employed in potato cellars with activity to continue until April 1. Trade and service indus-

Employment—

Industrial Employment
New Job Applicants
Job Applicants, End of Month

Feb. 1959	Jan. 1959	Feb. 1958	Feb. Ave. 1950-58
150,200	152,200	149,000	145,600
3,855	4,655	4,428	3,485
21,802	20,350	23,750	14,508

Insured Unemployment, Week of

New and Renewal Claims
Unemployed Weeks Filed
Total Unemployment Claims

Mar. 6 1959	Feb. 6 1959	Mar. 7 1958	Avg. 1st Mar. Wk. 1955-59
1,363	1,632	1,426	1,110
15,144	14,783	18,953	13,094
16,477	16,415	20,379	14,204

tries at season's low ebb. Calving and lambing started and will extend 90 days. Labor supply in balance.

GLASGOW, Fort Peck, Malta, Ophir—(991 jobseekers; 142 new, 828 men, 163 women). Major air base contractor plans general hiring latter part of month with gravel stockpiling first activity, using crushermen and heavy equipment operators. Housing contract for 460 units awarded, but no starting date given. Progress on water line from Missouri River to air base slow because of weather. Minimum crew employed on Fort Peck powerhouse project. Farm hiring over year ago.

GLENDIVE, Circle, Wibaux—(322 jobseekers; 79 new, 277 men, 45 women). Winter weather suspended most construction, oil field work, and other outside activities. Commercial and residential construction on intermittent basis as weather allows. Trade and service volume weakened during storm periods with mild recovery. Farm hiring slow with exception of livestock feeders.

GREAT FALLS, Choteau, Fort Benton, Stanford—(2,575 jobseekers; 449 new, 1,995 men, 620 women). Weather caused suspension of construction and other outdoor activities but no mass lay-offs occurred. Heavier than usual demand for construction workers predicted as weather warms. Some temporary lay-offs in service industries as cafes closed for remodeling, clean-up and repairs. Farm hiring up as supplemental feeding of livestock increased during storm periods. Sheep tagging operations delayed in remote areas where travel difficult. Area job prospects look bright with approach of spring.

HAMILTON, Stevensville—(598 jobseekers, 52 new, 475 men, 123 women). Industry lay-offs chiefly in logging as operations hampered by deep snow. Good stock pile of logs allowed mills to continue with little interruption. All construction activity retarded by weather. Start of limbing and potato sorting main agricultural activities.

HAYRE, Chinook, Harlem—(712 jobseekers, 146 new, 521 men, 191 women). Future area employment outlook bright both in industry and agriculture. Construction projects include new telephone building, armory, two

churches and smaller units. Trade and service building toward higher volume end of March. Sheep tagging in full swing; calving and lambing to start March 15, and field work on grain farms about April 1.

HELENA, Boulder, Garrison, Townsend, White Sulphur Springs—(1,274 jobseekers, 230 new, 1,015 men, 259 women). Most February lay-offs in lumber and heavy construction industries caused by weather conditions. Trade and service industries had good volume, influenced by influx during legislative session. Gradual reduction of force at East Helena smelter, with last lay-off affecting 11 workers. Worker demand exceeded supply in clerical and sales occupations. Farm labor demand improving as spring work season approaches.

KALISPELL, Columbia Falls, Eureka, Libby, Whitefish—(2,160 jobseekers, 302 new, 1,762 men, 398 women). Non-agricultural employment up from last year due to expanded activity in lumbering and logging, ice harvest, and service units. Retail trade made good showing following holiday business. Contract construction dormant but pick-up expected as weather warms. Spring thaws and soft logging roads could adversely affect employment totals next thirty days. Labor supply in area sufficient to meet anticipated future needs.

LEWISTOWN, Harlowton, Ryegate, Winnett—(458 jobseekers, 69 new, 364 men, 94 women). Twenty service workers idled as fire destroyed another major hotel, the second within several years. Plans made for building new structure. Completion of major highway bridge, radar station facilities, and lay-offs at brick and tile yard added to jobseeker file. Livestock feeding and start of calving were major farm activities.

LIVINGSTON, Big Timber—(587 jobseekers, 123 new, 384 men, 203 women). Lumber industry in area active with full winter crews at most mills. Force expansion and double shifts foreseen next 30 days. Contract construction at seasonal low with only minimum work forces. New super market scheduled for construction when weather permits. Railroad hiring slow, but expected to increase within coming months.

NINE YEARS OF MONTANA INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYMENT TOTALS, BY MONTHS (in Thousands)

	Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Aver.
1951	141.0	139.4	140.3	145.9	149.4	153.1	153.5	154.6	154.3	157.4	151.7	150.6	149.0
1952	140.5	140.7	143.0	149.7	154.8	159.9	159.5	161.2	160.4	157.9	156.0	154.9	153.2
1953	145.8	144.5	146.3	149.7	153.1	158.0	158.5	160.6	160.3	159.6	157.6	156.4	154.2
1954	146.7	145.5	147.2	151.1	155.7	161.6	164.1	165.4	164.8	153.9	158.2	155.7	155.0
1955	148.4	146.8	147.4	153.4	158.4	166.8	168.2	170.4	169.8	165.9	162.4	160.3	159.8
1956	154.3	152.1	154.2	160.7	167.0	175.0	175.7	177.5	176.9	173.6	167.9	165.2	166.7
1957	159.0	157.8	158.6	163.0	168.6	174.8	176.9	176.8	175.2	170.0	165.4	161.1	167.3
1958	154.6	151.4	151.7	157.4	163.5	169.6	170.4	171.8	170.8	168.2	163.3	157.8	162.5
1959	157.0	156.2											

Along the Hiring Line— Field Summary, Mar. 1

(Continued from page Two)

MILES CITY, Baker, Ekalaka, Broadus, Forsyth, Jordan, Terry—(676 jobseekers, 146 new, 546 men, 130 women). Normal labor market conditions prevailed despite severe weather. Two oil drilling rigs active near Miles City and Broadus. Main street business down moderately due to weather. Some job applicants leaving area for employment in other states. No immediate labor shortages seen in area.

MISSOULA, Drummond, Arlee, Superior—(1,735 jobseekers, 307 new, 1,244 men, 491 women). Logging and lumbering, although limited during storm periods, remained active with exception of higher mountain areas. Construction slow, but prospects bright for season with anticipated building of fire control research lab, new church, school, university building expansion, residential units, and super motel. Trade and service industries at normal seasonal low. Agriculture restricted to livestock feeding.

POLSON—(525 jobseekers, 67 new, 438 men, 87 women). Lumbering and logging held stronger than usual during winter season, but spring break-up and road limits may cause some temporary curtailment of woods crews and truckers. One new sawmill in operation, another under construction and scheduled for operation May 1. Labor market more active than last year, with good prospects for 1959.

SHELBY, Chester, Conrad—(447 jobseekers, 78 new, 328 men, 119 women). Weather conditions restricted construction to minor inside repair jobs; future outlook in this field optimistic. Condemnation proceedings on right-of-way for cloverleaf highway interchange scheduled this month. Oil exploration and development affected by weather and market conditions. Three sheep tagging and shearing crews in area.

SIDNEY—(443 jobseekers, 101 new, 396 men, 47 women). Winter weather kept outdoor activities at low ebb; construction limited to inside carpentry work. Oil field activity restricted to reworking producing wells. Trade and service industries weakened by winter slowdown. Farm labor demands increasing, but adequate labor supply in area at present.

THOMPSON FALLS, Hot Springs—(498 jobseekers, 56 new, 421 men, 77 women). Noxon Rapids Dam employment fixed at 250 during month, with sporadic lay-offs and recalls as some units completed before others started. Main activity is at dam and powerhouse where installation work is underway. Concrete pouring on highway bridge on one to two day week basis as weather allows. Peak production at local sawmills. Some reduction of woods crews as weather worsened.

WOLF POINT, Plentywood, Scooby—(633 jobseekers, 99 new, 530 men, 103 women). Force reductions in construction, oil fields, and trade industries added to the jobseeker files. Construction limited to inside work on residential and commercial units. No active oil drilling in area; one crew moved to North Dakota. Slump in trade and service idled cafe workers, bartenders, garage and farm implement personnel.

ESTIMATED EMPLOYMENT IN NON-AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES IN MONTANA (1)

(Compiled in co-operation with United States Bureau of Labor Statistics)

INDUSTRY	EMPLOYMENT			Net Change	
	Feb. 1959 (2)	Jan. 1959 (3)	Feb. 1958	Jan. '59 to Feb. '59	Feb. '58 to Feb. '59
NON-AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRIES	150,200	152,200	149,000	—2,000	1,200
Manufacturing	18,300	18,600	18,700	— 300	— 400
Durable goods	11,100	11,100	11,200	00	— 100
Lumber and timber products	6,000	6,100	5,600	— 100	400
Primary metals	3,900	3,900	4,400	00	— 500
Other (4)	1,200	1,100	1,200	100	00
Nondurable goods	7,200	7,500	7,500	— 300	— 300
Food and kindred products	3,600	3,800	3,800	— 200	— 200
Printing and publishing	1,700	1,700	1,600	00	100
Petroleum refining	900	1,000	1,000	— 100	— 100
Other (5)	1,000	1,000	1,100	00	— 100
Mining	9,200	9,100	8,500	100	700
Metal mining	5,800	5,800	5,300	00	500
Coal, quarrying and nonmetallic	700	700	600	00	100
Petroleum-natural gas production	2,700	2,600	2,600	100	100
Contract Construction	7,700	8,700	6,400	—1,000	1,300
Contractors, building construction	2,100	2,700	2,100	— 600	100
Contractors, other than building	2,400	2,400	1,500	00	900
Contractors, special trade	3,200	3,600	2,800	— 400	400
Transportation and utilities	18,400	18,700	19,300	— 300	— 900
Interstate railroads	9,000	9,100	9,600	— 100	— 600
Transportation except railroads	3,800	3,900	3,600	— 100	200
Utilities including communication	5,600	5,700	6,100	— 100	— 500
Trade	35,600	35,900	36,300	— 300	— 700
Wholesale trade	7,700	7,800	7,900	— 100	— 200
Retail trade	27,900	28,100	28,400	— 200	— 500
General merchandise and apparel	5,500	5,700	5,200	— 200	300
Food stores	4,400	4,400	4,300	00	100
Eating and drinking establishments	6,500	6,500	6,500	00	00
Automotive and filling stations	5,900	5,900	6,100	00	— 200
Retail trade not elsewhere classified	5,600	5,600	6,300	00	— 700
Finance, insurance and real estate	5,800	5,700	5,700	100	100
Services and miscellaneous	19,600	19,700	19,900	— 100	— 300
Hotels, rooming houses, camps, etc.	2,100	2,100	2,300	00	— 200
Personal services	2,200	2,200	2,000	00	200
Other (6)	15,300	15,400	15,600	— 100	— 300
Government	35,600	35,800	34,200	— 200	1,400
Federal	8,200	8,400	8,500	— 200	— 300
State and local	27,400	27,400	25,700	00	1,700
Great Falls Area (Cascade County)	17,900	18,200	17,800	— 300	100
Manufacturing	2,900	2,900	2,700	00	200
Contract construction	1,200	1,400	1,200	— 200	00
Transportation and utilities	2,100	2,100	2,300	00	— 200
Trade, wholesale and retail	5,000	5,100	5,100	— 100	— 100
Services and miscellaneous (7)	3,900	3,900	3,800	00	100
Government	2,800	2,800	2,700	00	100

- (1) Estimates include all full and part-time wage and salary workers who worked or received pay during the pay period ending nearest the 15th of the month. Proprietors, firm members, personnel of the armed forces, domestic servants, and self-employed persons are excluded.
- (2) Preliminary estimates based on return from samples of 662 selected Montana establishments.
- (3) Figures previously released have been revised on return from 1,015 such establishments.
- (4) Includes fabricated metal products, machinery except electrical, furniture, stone and clay products.
- (5) Includes apparel, chemicals, and miscellaneous manufacturing products.
- (6) Includes commercial trade schools, auto repair services and garages, miscellaneous repair services and hand trades, motion pictures, amusements and recreation, medical and health, law offices and professional services, non-profit membership organizations and businesses not otherwise classified.
- (7) Same as (6) above, also includes finance, real estate and mining.

COMPARISON OF BASIC LABOR MARKET ACTIVITIES IN FEBRUARY, 1959 AND FEBRUARY, 1958

Employment Service Office	New Job Applicants				Jobseekers in File				Job Placements								U. I. Claims Wk. 3-6	
	Feb. 1959		Feb. 1958		Feb. 1959		Feb. 1958		Feb. 1959				Feb. 1958				1959	1958
	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Tot.	Vet.	Ind.	Ag.	Tot.	Vet.	Ind.	Ag.	Tot.	Vet.		
Anaconda	144	25	160	34	486	52	521	127	15	5	20	10	7	7	12	3	440	394
Billings	643	170	556	191	3,079	1,064	2,694	1,057	237	48	285	120	220	45	265	114	2,134	2,666
Borgerman	173	58	184	59	825	262	864	297	90	27	117	35	62	13	75	37	416	467
Butte	297	81	611	200	1,968	585	1,585	892	71	2	73	35	28	14	42	9	1,287	2,072
Cut Bank	78	32	98	38	57	226	562	237	15	83	118	23	10	52	62	13	310	404
Dillon	74	27	86	30	24	367	350	135	20	36	56	28	17	33	50	18	196	278
Glacier	142	34	89	37	51	47	7	76	66	68	134	50	63	8	71	21	763	639
Glendive	79	28	102	32	22	82	27	103	33	14	52	21	40	17	57	35	239	214
Great Falls	449	156	369	136	1,573	517	1,056	427	161	111	277	69	154	112	266	68	1,918	2,254
Hamilton	52	11	68	16	568	192	681	196	17	11	28	12	12	7	19	5	424	525
Hayden	146	34	153	34	712	228	738	288	97	20	117	45	88	13	101	53	583	726
Helena	230	77	290	112	1,274	485	1,230	496	181	6	187	52	55	4	59	29	902	862
Kalispell	302	81	295	105	2,160	640	3,123	1,085	147	6	153	19	47	19	66	21	2,013	2,922
Laurel	69	18	79	21	458	162	43	155	27	18	45	21	15	8	23	9	349	404
Livingston	127	23	86	33	587	159	603	226	33	5	38	14	23	—	23	7	477	606
Missoula	146	43	169	58	676	246	692	276	43	25	68	22	21	11	32	19	529	549
Missoula	367	83	424	132	1,735	566	1,633	689	98	11	109	45	62	7	69	46	1,303	1,787
Polson	67	10	58	22	525	175	735	268	30	4	34	16	1	5	6	1	486	703
Shelby	78	27	99	28	447	163	538	200	47	126	173	23	47	133	180	32	342	443
Sidney	101	29	168	48	443	136	413	134	18	14	32	12	8	2	10	4	378	364
Thompson Falls	56	22	78	25	498	158	68	259	62	2	64	32	78	5	83	39	405	681
Wolf Point	99	23	74	20	633	213	47	168	23	2	25	5	17	3	20	7	483	428
TOTALS	3,855	1,112	4,428	1,463	21,802	7,109	23,750	8,569	1,556	647	2,203	759	1,075	516	1,591	590	16,477	20,379

*Include 690 claims of the Federal Employees UC Program, 491 same a year ago.

AVERAGE HOURS AND EARNINGS IN SELECTED MONTANA INDUSTRIES

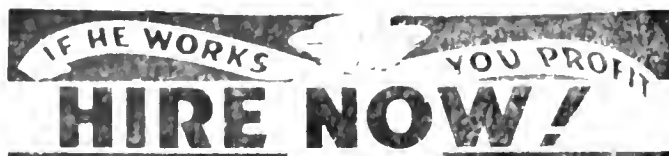
(Produced in co-operation with United States Bureau of Labor Statistics)
(Hours and earnings data exclude administrative and salaried personnel)

INDUSTRY	Average Weekly Earnings			Average Weekly Hours			Average Hourly Earnings		
	Feb. (1) 1959	Jan. (2) 1959	Feb. 1958	Feb. (1) 1959	Jan. (2) 1959	Feb. 1958	Feb. (1) 1959	Jan. (2) 1959	Feb. 1958
All Manufacturing	\$94.56	\$95.11	\$85.56	39.9	40.3	37.2	\$2.37	\$2.36	\$2.30
Durable goods	92.04	92.90	85.35	39.5	39.7	37.6	2.33	2.34	2.27
Primary metals	94.56	92.19	90.46	39.9	38.9	39.5	2.37	2.37	2.29
Nondurable goods	100.12	99.42	85.98	41.2	41.6	36.9	2.42	2.39	2.33
Food and kindred products	90.46	91.76	72.96	43.7	45.2	38.4	2.07	2.03	1.90
All Mining	100.85	100.25	98.98	40.5	40.1	40.4	2.49	2.50	2.45
Metal mining	94.53	94.53	93.27	39.9	38.9	38.7	2.43	2.43	2.41
Transportation and Utilities (except railroads)	94.18	93.38	90.16						
Transportation (except railroads)	100.6	104.23	106.34						
Utilities and communication	94.67	85.32	79.75	39.2	39.5	38.9	2.46	2.16	2.05

(1) Preliminary estimates. (2) Figures previously released have been revised on more complete returns.

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION
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